



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

*Spokane Veterans Home - 222 E 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. Spokane, WA 99202*

Dear Veterans Home Family or Representative:

04/10/2020

We are sending this letter in our continuing effort to keep you informed of the status of our Home during the COVID-19 crisis.

As we shared over the phone on Tuesday evening, the Spokane Veterans Home had two residents test positive for COVID-19. Sadly, one of those residents, who had been on end of life care, passed away on Wednesday. Together we mourn the passing of this veteran and honor their service to our country. We have isolated the affected floor and staff are wearing additional PPEs (Personal Protective Equipment) and the masks and gloves when providing resident care. We have an adequate supply of PPE right now and are securing more to ensure the safety of our residents and employees. Teams on all three shifts are cleaning surface areas, including frequently touched places like handrails, door handles, touch screens and carts multiple times per shift. We have also called in additional help to adjust to the extra work that needs to be completed.

On Thursday, five additional residents were tested and we will begin to proactively test residents who are in the affected area. Staff have been and will continue to closely monitor all residents including 4-hour symptom and temperature checks. We are working with the Department of Health and Spokane Regional Health District to ensure all infection control procedures are being followed.

I want to acknowledge the incredible work that is being done by our entire Veterans Home team! None of us have ever experienced a situation like this, yet our dedicated staff leave their home each day to serve our Veterans and their families with the utmost compassion. I want to personally thank each and every one of them for their perseverance and passion to serve our heroes.

Our priority remains keeping our residents, our staff and you safe and healthy. The changes we've had to make to do this have been hard on everyone, especially our residents, you their family and friends. Our team continues to coordinate virtual visits with family members and to date, we have conducted 99 video virtual visits. We know this is no substitute for being there in person, but for now it's as close as we can safely get. If you would like to schedule a visit, please call Jeanette Sauer, Recreation Therapy director at (509)344-5788.

In addition to the virtual visits, the Spokane Veterans Home Recreation Therapy department has also been bringing a little cheer during these tough times by organizing dress up days such as western day and crazy or ugly shirt day. Walking around in our interesting outfits we often get smiles and laughs from our Veterans which is so uplifting during this difficult time. They are also using the sensory cart with supplies such as: music and memory IPODS, books, word searches, brain teasers, and talking books.

Fun trivia has been posted in hallways including this one: In 1869, "A dentist was the first person to add sugar to chewing gum" which helps get conversations started as we are providing care!

We also have a request for you. We need to ask that you continue to follow the Stay Home, Stay Healthy Order. This includes not coming on to the campus for 'window visits' and not asking your loved one to come outside the facility to meet in the parking lot. The CDC warns that individuals can carry and spread this virus and not even know they have it. For many people, the effects of the virus may be mild, but please remember that people age 65 and older, and those with underlying medical conditions, are most at risk for life-threatening complications and these are the very people we care for in our Homes. We will only prevent the spread of the Coronavirus if we all do our part to limit the opportunity for the virus to spread, which includes staying home unless travel is essential.

Thank you for your understanding and your efforts as we work to get through this challenging time together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick McNabb', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Patrick McNabb  
Spokane Veterans Home Administrator